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ACCOMMODATION

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This chapter has useful information on what you need to consider before you go to the USA in relation to finding accommodation. Please read this chapter carefully and do as much research you can on sourcing accommodation before going to the USA.

What do I need to consider before I go?

You should try to find somewhere to stay even on a temporary basis before you travel. It will be easier to find work and accommodation of your own when you have a residential address.

If possible organise to stay with family or friends for your first few weeks. If you plan to stay with friends or relatives make sure you have up-to-date addresses and telephone numbers (including area codes) and make sure they are expecting you, even if they do not meet you on arrival.

If you have no relatives or friends in the USA, book a hostel/hotel before you go - you may need to use a credit card in order to secure a booking. Think about joining An Óige, the Youth Hostel Association - there is no age limit on joining and as a member you will get discounted hostel rates. For more information please contact

An Óige

61 Mountjoy Square
Dublin 1

Telephone: 01 830 1766

Website: www.irelandyha.org

Email: mailbox@anoige.ie

What do I need to know about finding accommodation?

If you are living in the USA the cost of renting accommodation is one of the major expenses you need to be aware of. In general apartments are the main source of accommodation for many people in most US cities. Rental costs may vary depending on lease period, for example, 3 months, 6 months, 1 year etc., what the size of the accommodation is, for example, 1 bedroom, 2 bedroom etc, region & metropolitan areas where it is located, amenities provided etc. You should also be aware of the following:

- Some landlords request the first month, the last month and another month deposit in advance. Try to find out the deposit amount that you have to pay and how you can get back the deposit after you move out
- Check whether the apartment's lease can be transferred to another person's name if you have move to a different place
- You should try to rent the apartment in your name, as this will improve your credit history
- Be aware that most properties will not be furnished so it is advisable that you read your rental agreement carefully
- Salaries and prices vary as you move from the East Coast (New York, Boston, Philadelphia) to the West Coast (Los Angeles, San Francisco)

- If possible organise to stay with a friend or relative to start with
- Be prepared to spend \$800-\$2,000 (2007 figures) on rent monthly if you want to live alone in most city centres
- A 2-bed apartment in the suburbs costs between \$700-\$1,800 (2007 figures) per month on average, depending on the city
- Sharing will cost at least \$400 (2007 figure) and could cost more.

Utilities

Confirm whether your rent includes utilities such as heating, lighting and electricity. If you must get utilities in your name the utility company will require certain information such as:

- Your address details, apartment number, etc
- Your Social Security Number (SSN)
- Your employment details and a valid daytime phone number
- List of services required (If you are getting a phone installed whether you require long distance services)
- Your landlord information and contact details.

If you do not have a Social Security Number, 2 forms of ID can be provided.

Accepted ID would include:

- Passport
- Driver's licence (International or Foreign)
- Student card
- It is a good idea to have your birth certificate but is not an acceptable form of ID.

Electricity/gas costs vary from state to state. It is also worth considering that air-conditioning may be necessary during the summer and it can be expensive.

Do I need to have a telephone installed in the property I am renting?

It is a good idea to have a phone installed, as it would be important to have a phone installed so that prospective employers can contact you easily. You should also consider having an answering machine (with a local number) as this is essential for job-hunting.

If there is no telephone in the apartment/house you are renting you will need to contact the telephone company in your area (please see the website www.yellowpages.com, or refer to the Yellow Pages to find a telephone company) in order to get a telephone installed. You will need to provide the phone company with the following:

- Identification for example a passport or driver's licence
- Proof of address for example a household bill in your name or a rental agreement
- Your social security number
- Your landlord's name and contact details.

If I want to buy a mobile phone what will I need to do?

If you want to buy a 'pay as you go' mobile phone generally you do not need a Social Security Number to purchase one. Before you buy a pay as you go mobile/cell phone you should shop around to get the best deal to suit your needs, for example, depending on the mobile company some calls are cheaper at certain times of the day.

If you want to get a bill pay mobile/cell phone, the phone company may require identification, proof of address, your social security number and your bank/employment details. Before you buy a bill pay mobile/cell phone you should shop around to make sure you get the best deal to suit your needs, for example, whether the package you choose includes reduced international calls or long distance calls.

How do I find an apartment/house to rent or share?

To help you find accommodation to share you should consider contacting:

- Friends and relatives
- Irish Immigration Centers.

You can also find accommodation advertised in the following:

- Local shops, supermarkets, laundrettes (Laundromats), and college notice boards
- Newspapers (Irish Voice, Irish Echo if in New York), on properties ("For Rent" signs)
- Accommodation & Real Estate Agencies (be aware they may charge a fee)
- The Internet. You can check the following websites:

www.apartments.com

www.apartmentguide.com

www.rent.com

www.affordablesearch.com

www.apartmentfinder.com

www.forrent.com

www.apartment-renting.net

www.apartmentsearch.com

www.aptselector.com

www.cityleases.com

www.flatster.net

www.livingchoices.com

www.rentnet.com

www.sublet.com

www.roommates.com

www.room-roommate.com

www.apartmentratings.com

www.apartmentreviews.net

www.residentapproved.com

www.craigslist.com

Is there anything else I need to consider?

- Costs for deposits for accommodation are substantial. They can range from up to \$1000 to \$3000 (2007 figures) depending on the area you want to live in and the type of accommodation required
- You will need at least \$5,000 (2007 figure) to get started, even if you are sharing accommodation

- Remember, even if you get a job immediately you will not get paid at once and you always spend more money when you are in a new place
- Inspect the premises thoroughly before signing the lease agreement
- Pay special attention to safety hazards, e.g. electrical appliances, fire escapes etc
- Check the details of any letting/leasing agreement. Be sure you understand it, particularly as regards moving out, parties etc
- If you violate your lease agreement it is possible that you will lose your deposit
- Find an apartment near a subway or bus stop if you do not have your own transport
- Check whether your accommodation comes with a parking space. If so, is the cost included in the rent?